

Summer 2002 Edition

“Spring Training”

Spring 2002 has been busy for us, both in terms of weather, and in the Skywarn program in general. After a fairly inactive winter, we jumped right into an active weather pattern with a few severe weather events, including a couple of real “doozies” around the area. As usual, our spotters were on the top of their game, and we thank you for your timely reports.

The Skywarn Team has been busy canvassing the region, conducting spotter classes for over **500** spotters. This, by the way, is a new record for our office! Starting with a (much) larger than expected crowd in Goshen in Orange County NY, we’ve had an excellent response to our new Basic Class presentation.

As promised, we conducted our first Advanced Spotter Training Class. In just 2 classes (in Mahwah NJ and Southold NY), we trained nearly 70 Advanced Spotters. The response to this new Advanced Classes has been fantastic.

Thanks to all who have helped make this a great success already, in particular, our Bergen County Coordinator Team (Mike WA2MWT, Dave K2DBK, George KC2GLG) and Tony Mondaro from JCES. Their comments and suggestions were in tremendous help in preparing the course. Anyone who attended one of the courses this spring that have comments or suggestions from the courses, please mail or email them to Scott. They are most appreciated.

For those who would like to attend a Basic or Advanced Class, there will be some additional classes offered this fall. We’ll be posting new dates and locations on our website and broadcast them over NOAA Weather Radio as well.

Groups that are interested in hosting a Basic (or Advanced) Class this fall or next spring, please call or e-mail Scott KC2JCB and we’ll work on setting the class up. This is especially true for Amateur Radio Clubs in our County Warning Area (see the Editor’s “Parting Shots” at the end of the newsletter for more). Phone numbers and email addresses are at the end of the newsletter.

From the Classroom Into the Field...

“Urgent – Immediate Broadcast Requested! Severe Thunderstorm Warning for Northern Bergen County and Northern Passaic County! Skywarn Activation Requested!”

Less than twenty four hours after several members of the 10-70 Repeater Association attended the Basic Skywarn Course at the Law and Public Safety Institute in Mahwah NJ, the National Weather Service in Upton was issuing warnings of “damaging winds in excess of 55 MPH, large damaging hail, deadly lightning and very heavy rain.”

At 4:32 PM, the W2PQG Repeater of the 10-70 Repeater Association came on the air with a Skywarn Net, with Net Control Stations George Sabbi, KC2GLG, and David Kozinn, K2DBK (Bergen County Deputy Skywarn Coordinators). Bergen County Coordinator Mike Adams, WA2MWT, checked in on a two-meter HT from a Ramsey Ambulance Corps EMS Unit, as Doppler Radar indicated a severe thunderstorm near Ramsey.

Over the next two hours, 36 Amateur Radio Operators would check into the net, a few from base stations, but most from mobile rigs. Reports were received from 28 different municipalities, located in seven different northern New Jersey and Southern New York counties. Sixteen hams reporting in were first time Skywarn Net participants.

Net Control immediately communicated all severe weather and damage reports to the meteorologists working at the National Weather Service in Upton. They also served to assist the forecasters as they issued additional Severe Thunderstorm Warnings for Essex, Hudson, Union and Richmond Counties, as well as for the local coastal waters.

Many of the reports taken were included in Preliminary Local Storm Reports issued by NWS Upton. Most of this spotter- provided information was being sent over the NWS’s EMWIN (Emergency Managers Weather Information Network) Data Stream, even as the event was unfolding.

Ham operators providing reports included: Nick, KC2FQI; John, KC2JEJ; Bob, N2MDA; Justin, KC2GIK; Steve, KC2GDQ; Dave, N2UTG; Pat, WA2PFS; Matty, N2UCA; Bill, KC2FYA; Lou, N2UCA; Missy, K2MIS; Bob, N2LYY; Bob, WB2AIU; Allan, KC2FZU; Herb, N2OPJ; Jon, KJ2N; and Efrem, W2CZ.

Hams checking into a Bergen County Skywarn Net for the first-time included: Howie, WB2AWQ; Herb, W2SMB; Joe, KC2DBJ; Bob, N2SU; Fred, N2FOZ; Marv, K2IPH; Jim, N2HMF; Americo, N2ZIL; Fausto, KC2FTO; Bob, KC2ILF; Harvey, K2BOG; Adam, KC2GLI; Chris, KC2FBK; Joe, WB4WZZ; Lorenz, KA2NRW; and Gerald, KC2GCG.

*Submitted by Mike Adams, WA2MWT,
Bergen County SKYWARN Coordinator*

...Editor's Extra...

This is just one example of the excellent teamwork between the National Weather Service meteorologists and our volunteer spotters. We thank all of the "hams" who checked in with reports on that busy severe weather day, and we also thanks all of the "non-hams" who e-mailed or phoned in reports to us. All of the timely reports likely saved many lives on that day. This is what the Skywarn program is all about. You ARE our eyes and ears out in the field! **Thanks!**

NOAA Environmental Hero

Tony Mondaro wears numerous hats. Skywarn Spotter since 1982. NWS Cooperative Observer. Hudson County NJ OEM and the Jersey Coastal Emergency Services Weather Coordinator. EMS Chief for North Arlington Fire Department.

Well, now he has an award to add to his collection...**2002 NOAA Environmental Hero**. This award was bestowed upon Tony at a ceremony on June 27th.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA, the parent agency of the National Weather Service) created this award in 1995 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Earth Day, in order to honor NOAA volunteers for their "tireless efforts to preserve and protect our nation's environment."

Tony has certainly done that over the years, both as a cooperative observer and as a Skywarn Spotter. A Skywarn Spotter since 1982, Tony often initiates call to the Upton office at the first sign of severe weather. His efficient collection and communication of reports have led to more timely warnings and forecast updates.

Congratulations Tony!

Spotter Criteria Refresher...

We've included our usual reporting criteria reminder. The e-mail address to use is at the end of the newsletter. For those without e-mail capabilities, or for reports that are more urgent, please use the 800 number you received at your spotter training class. (If you need the number, email or call Scott and he'll send you a reminder.)

Skywarn will automatically be activated following a NOAA Weather Radio Tone Alert for any of the following...

- Flood Watch or Warning
- Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Watch
- Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado Warning, if not already activated by a preceding Watch)
- Tropical Storm or Hurricane Warning

Here are the reporting criteria...

1. **HIGHEST PRIORITY...Please contact the NWS by phone or amateur radio (if the radio is being staffed)...**
 - a. Any deaths or injuries associated with hazardous weather
 - b. Any TORNADO or WATERSPOUT.
2. High Priority...Please report the following via phone, email, fax or amateur radio...
 - a. Funnel or wall clouds.
 - b. Clusters of "Virga" that expand as they descend beneath the cloud base. (Classic microburst signature!)
 - c. Thunderstorm wind gusts of 58+ mph or wind gusts that cause structural damage to homes, power lines or trees.
 - d. Hail of 3/4" in diameter or larger (about the size of a dime or larger).

- e. Flooding of rivers or streams into homes or industries. Also, any stream, river, or poor drainage urban flooding which make roadways totally impassable.
- f. Rainfall amounts:
 - i. Following short, torrential downpours (usually 1 hour or less)
 - ii. 2" in 3 hours.
 - iii. 1" or more in an hour in urban areas.

3. Lower priority (but still important)... Please report the following via phone, email, fax or amateur radio...
 - a. Thunderstorm wind gusts 40-57 mph.
 - b. Hail of any size smaller than 3/4" in diameter.
 - c. Event total rainfall.
4. ***During Tropical Storm or Hurricane Warnings...***
 - a. Only report Priority 1 and 2 Conditions above.
 - b. Any wind gust 58 mph or greater.
 - c. Any KNOWN storm surge inundations of coastal areas. *(Never go to the shore to investigate it yourself, and EVACUATE immediately if told to do so by Emergency Management Personnel.)*
 - d. Highest wind gust during the tropical storm/hurricane.
 - e. The lowest barometric pressure and time it occurred.
 - f. Event total rainfall.

As always, the National Weather Service thanks all of our spotters and other cooperating agencies for all of the assistance and reports during severe weather events.